certainly foretell, proceeding on the known principles of the human mind, that when infidelity has advanced a little farther with its work of devastation, nature, which abhors a vacuum, will demand something positive to fill up the void. If scriptural truth does not pre-oecupy the ground, it may be feared that the superstition which grew so vigorously on the debris of fallen empires in the middle ages of Europe, and which has been transplanted into the rich but wild soil of South America, and of not a few of the British colonies, may yet find its seeds taking congenial root in the heaving plains on which the superstitions of India and China are soon to decay.

We know what has taken place in France. The infidel principle wrought its appropriate work of destruction at the first Revolution. The opposite principle then rushed in once more to fill up the void. Napoleon Bonaparte perceived that a new and vigorous crop must spring up from the old and indestructible principles which have their roots deep down in the human heart; and that the lean and haggard ears which infidelity had raised up were becoming thinner and weaker, and must needs die. He reasoned from Avhat he had experienced in his own breast more than from observation, and his reasoning had therefore the firmer foundation to rest on. M. Thiers, in whom the conqueror has found a befitting historian—the one being as clever and as unprincipled, too, as the other—has furnished us with a deeply interesting description of this singular passage in his history. *' For my part/' said Bonaparte, when at Malmaison, " I never hear tho sound of the church-bell in the neighbouring village without emotion." The proposal to restore the Catholic religion was listened to with Bcorn by those *Havana* of Paris, who had all their days been ravetcrately opposed to religion. They scowled upon and ridiculed the proposal; declared it was weakness in him to submit to superstition which had for ever passed away; that ho needed no such aid to government, and that he might do what he pleased. " Yes," says he, " but only with regard to the real arid sensibly felt wants of France." The real and sensibly felt wants which he felt himself, and which the nation felt, were the craving for religious belief and worship suitable to their particular desires, and fitted to meet and gratify them. The events which followed tho resolution taken by Bonaparte—the negotiations with the Pope, and the Betting up of the Romish worship, and the general enthusiasm of the nation—all show how deeply planted, and how strong is the religious affection in the human heart. " Whether true or false, sublime or ridiculous," is tho reflection of the historian, ** man must have a religion. Everywhere, in all ages, in all countries, in ancient as in modern times, in civilized as well as in barbarian nations, we find him a worshipper at some altar, be it venerable, degraded, or blood-stained," *

Infidelity, like religion, has existed in all countries, and originates in that dec.p impulse which drives man away from God. But it cannot be the prevailing state*

of mind in a nation for any length of time. The reason is obvious. Both of the principles to which wo have referred as existing in the mind must operate. Neither can bo destroyed, and both are in their nature active. But the infidel principle can exist and flourish in the very midst of reigning superstition. It derives its strongest nourishment from the rank and foul superstition fermenting around it. It points to the folly of the ignorant or deluded devotee with a sneer, and congratulates itself on its own superiority. Except when dreadfully rankled and reproached, it is not disposed to make any sacrifices for its principles, or rather want of principle. Harassed by internal fears, it is at heart cowardly, even when it must seem courageous. Coleridge says of blasphemy, that "

* Thiers, Consulate and Empire.